

## THE BLOOMFIELD CITIZEN

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No one who remarks the advance of the cholera from India to Egypt, and thence to Trieste and London, needs to be told that this whole subject is of great importance. It may even happen that the disease may spread to America sooner than its usual rate. Therefore we have secured the preparation of a careful article covering the historical and medical side of the question, and will publish it editorially next week.

WHILE our subscription list is making steady progress, and our increasing circulation shows the interest of the community in the success of THE CITIZEN, we want to remind all our readers that we would like their names as subscribers. We are glad to find that each copy of the paper is read by the people in squads and detachments. But we are willing to print a larger edition, and so give our friends the benefit of elbow room in hot weather.

## THE COUNTY ASSESSORS.

We print elsewhere a full report of the proceedings of the County Board of Assessors. It will be observed that the value of property has greatly increased during the past year, and that the rate of tax for county purposes this year is 68 on \$100, instead of 88 on \$100 for 1882. This is equivalent to a reduction of one-fifth of the amount to be raised by the county. There is no tax this year for State purposes, and the poll tax is reduced from \$4 to \$1, so the effect will be to lower the rate quite appreciably.

A careful examination of the returns of assessments for personal property will be interesting. Let us take the six townships which return the largest number of polls:

Per-	No. Popula-	Assess. Asses-	Asses-
Estate.	tion on	on each	by
Polls.	1882.	\$	\$
East Orange	891,000	1,304	8,349
Bloomfield	467,000	92	5,748
Montclair	194,000	726	5,148
West Orange	200,000	648	5,988
South Orange	225,000	66	3,911
Caldwell	208,000	53	3,167
		400	66

From the above table it will be seen that, so far as tax returns show, the average wealth in personal property is greatest in East Orange, where the average is \$109 to every man, woman, and child, while it is lowest in Montclair, where the average is but \$38 to each inhabitant. This is about one-third as great as East Orange, less than half as much as Bloomfield, and but little more than half as much as Caldwell, whose population are more largely engaged in local interests and business than either of the other townships. When we remember the extravagant boasts and claims made by our Montclair friends as to its wealth and prosperity, we are compelled to conclude either that the assessor has not made the proper effort to discover what property is taxable, or that the wealth of which they boast has no existence outside of the imagination of those who find their chief pleasure in magnifying Montclair at the expense of the other townships.

## ANTI-USURY.

A correspondent in another column replies to some remark made by us last week upon the subject of interest.

It always gives us pleasure when we shoot at random to find we have hit the mark. When the enemy replies, your batteries are doing some execution.

We readily concede the value of the horse. His usefulness is beyond question. If "Anti-User" is disposed to doubt it, and wishes to put his logic to the test, let him try to borrow one, say in the winter time, when his ear is charmed by the music of the sleigh bells. We will venture to say the owner will not loan or hire too cheap.

Yet even the horse is sometimes turned out to pasture, the money left in a deposit vault for safe keeping.

"Anti-User" constantly mistakes the exception for the rule. In doing the world's work, both horses and money are valuable. When needed, the borrower is

well satisfied to pay for their use, and the lender only receives a fair reward for the care and watchfulness by which he has held his property intact, and for the self-denial which he exercises in handing it to another.

His services and self-denial should be repaid, as are those of the seller or the renter of a house or lands.

The Bible argument is as lame as that of the horse. Special laws were enacted for God's "peculiar people." By one of these all real property reverted to its original owners after a term of years—in the year of Jubilee. By another, interest was prohibited between one another.

Yet even the Jews were not forbidden to take interest or usury from the nations about them. In Deuteronomy xxiii, 19, we read: "Unto a stranger that may lend upon usury," usury meaning simply that which is paid for the "use" of a thing.

The New Testament passages are indecisive, since no opinion is expressed of the matter in question.

Oppression is wrong everywhere and always; extortion is forbidden by the laws of God and man; but the receiving of a proper interest is neither robbery nor extortion.

## STRIKES AND BROTHERHOODS.

The great telegraphic strike, with all its incidents and results, brings forcibly forward the old problem of Capital and Labor. More representative forces could not be in battle at these two. The telegraphic fraternity, as a rule, are tolerably well educated; and the average of real cultivation and thoughtfulness among them is very high. Their occupation enlarges their minds. The infinite variety of messages which pass over the wires suggests a great deal which does not readily occur to other laboring classes.

Nor can one say that a telegraphic operator does not labor in the strictest sense. His ear must take in the sounds of the dots and dashes of the Morse alphabet, and his finger must "write" them with his key upon the flowing current of electricity, and both of these operations must be not merely accurate, but swift. It is this swiftness and this hurry which wear hardest, upon those who are thus constantly employed during their working hours. Nervous force must be expended at a truly ruinous rate, to obtain the results that are sought. Operators frequently suffer from afflictions of the fingers and of the forearm, and occasionally from obscure diseases of the brain and the mind, in consequence of the strain of their employment.

Hence, there is probably no class who are brought so immediately into contact with the higher phases of labor as are the telegraphic operators. And when we read their temperate and careful manifesto, we are compelled to acknowledge that they do not lack good generalship and efficient organization. There was never a better planned "strike" in the history of the artisan world.

Opposite to these men stands an organization, perfected on this continent as nowhere else, a vast and huge entity, whose wires carry the thrill of contemporaneous life even in advance of the sun, annihilating both space and time. From the great building at the corner of Dey Street and Broadway, as from the centre of a web, the lines run out to far Cathay and rich Peru and golden California and the storied East. Here sits the giant—sometimes called a monopoly—who manages these majestic interests. Monopolies have their good side, and the waves of popular opinion eat away upon their prides and rates, so that it may be said of them that they are not absolutely insensible to the demands of their fellow men.

The issue is a sharp one, and there is no mediator that has yet been discovered, unless it be this public opinion. Both parties desire it on their side. The striking telegraphers earnestly conciliate it; but to them it means support, livelihood, justification. The companies plead their case before it, with an advantage given to them by reason of the inconvenience to which their patrons are subjected. Suppose, then, that we offset these issues. Here stands a demand for shorter hours and better pay, based on claims of grievance and of injustice. There fronts it a strong corporation, indispensable to the world, with millions of money and the opportunity to immediately employ thousands of trained, and half-trained new operators. Is the result doubtful?

But there is another element to be added.—This strike is manipulated by the "Knights of Labor," and it is of one fabric with all the other labor-affiliations. At the whistle of a single operator, hundreds of men obey the Brotherhood and drop their work. They oppose one tyranny by submitting to another. The international banding of the various guilds and societies of craftsmen makes this particular strike a matter of moment to the iron-moulder and the cigar-maker as well as to the telegrapher. If ever there is to be an Armageddon, it would seem that it might come as between the combination of Capital and the combination of Labor.

There is much significance in the remark that sooner than suffer a disastrous strike manufacturers will succumb. But it is pretty well settled among manufacturers, now, that they must and will control their own business. And the yielding of individual laborers to the order for a "strike" is often followed by the greater evils of a "lock-out."

Shall workmen, therefore, not organize? We would not assert it; for they need to do so in mutual aid and protection and benefit. But the issue of this present strike will teach, as we hope, a final lesson

respecting the temperate use of such a combined action.

Should corporations yield to these demands and treat with these brotherhoods, acknowledging them as bodies who govern these workmen? We dare not say it, for then there would be a tyranny of the weak, the prejudiced, and the wicked, into which has been also injected the black blood of foreign *athosism*. To us it seems that a recognition of the Brother hood in such a relation would be the opening of a most dangerous door.

The present strike, like that of the freight-handlers, can only end, by the logic of fate, in one way. But if it secures substantial attention to real grievances, and is conducted without violence or lawlessness, it may prove the most valuable precedent ever set in America—and for both parties.

## HAZARDOUS EXHIBITIONS.

The recent reported drowning of Captain Webb, the great swimmer, brings up the old problem of hazardous exhibitions. In his case no one but himself believed that he had the ghost of a chance to survive the whirlpool rapids. The hotel and railroad companies at Niagara Falls refused to make money out of his risk—and in so doing they have set an example to be admired and to be extensively copied. We hold that it is the province of any municipality to step in and prevent acrobats, wild beast tamers, balloonists, and such-like folk, from taking their lives so rashly into their hands. Such a thing as the shooting of objects from the head or the fingers is always objectionable and decidedly demoralizing.

This later civilization of ours looks back at the days of Rome with some contempt and disgust for their bloodthirsty cruelties. We remember when Trajan, who scarcely ranks as the worst of the Emperors, forced ten thousand prisoners and gladiators to contend in the arena, and that these desperate and bloody battles for life went on for one hundred and twenty-three days. No wonder that Cicero criticised the sports of his time and that the Stoic philosophers gave their public condemnation to such practices.

They did not, apparently, find much fault when women turned successive somersaults over swords fixed upright in the ground, or when slack-rope or tight-rope performers amused the throng. It was not until Christianity influenced legislation that any real general resistance was made. Modern life, however, is renewing the love of civil sport for which Rome in her decay was so conspicuous.

It would not be possible to naturalize in the United States the Spanish bullfights; but we have dog-fights, and cock-fights, and man-fights. Even the dudes have lately taken to a mild sort of pugilism. And certainly the exhibitions which involve danger of life and limb are not discouraged as they should be. The rivalry of professionals leads them to discard nets and appliances for safety, as the brakemen on some railroads refuse to take a stick instead of their hands in coupling cars. It is well known that there is a double motive to be met: the fear of being called cowardly, and the desire to be popular and successful.

It is at this point that our common sense has lately had a spasm of stepping in. The refusal to co-operate with the headstrong but gallant swimmer is about the first laurel which those who live upon the flotsam and jetsam of the great catastrophe have wrested from sometimes indignant and always greatly plundered world. They wear it well, and may they wear it long!

But it ought to be understood that the law (and not mere private good judgment) should, everywhere and always, prevent such things as the perilous feats of Donaldson, the fatal shot of Frans Frayne, the terrible tumble of the "human cannon-ball," and the useless sacrifice of Captain Webb. That skilled and tried swimmer might have helped his fellow men far along into ways of safety and active benevolence. But he chose to attempt the impossible, and there was no noble nigh to hinder, unless indeed—and also for the *unless*!—this has been the most stupendous advertising scheme ever concocted. What a pity that these very exhibitions should have led us to doubt our fellow men!

LITERARY market report: Short stories are more lively and in fair demand; editorials are firm; essays dull, sermons dullest; French novels have a downward tendency; poetry has suddenly advanced from one cent and a half to three cents a yard.—*Philadelphia News*.

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